

Modron

Character Race Option

"The cycle which culminates in the grand march concludes and repeats in just twenty days, five hours, thirty-three minutes, twelve seconds..."

"Yes, thank you," acknowledges a grizzled, if respectably-dressed male human. He waves his right hand smoothly with the air of a showman, fingers wide, indicating to the assembled crowd of merchants, streetfolk, and urchins that they should listen well to what the man's modron companion speaks next.

"And," says the man to the modron, "Can you tell us what you mean by this 'grand march' to which you refer?"

The boxlike modron's eyes unfocus and refocus, never breaking their gaze at a vacant point somewhere above the crowd. Though the odd creature remains utterly motionless and expressionless, those as well-versed in modron society as its human friend unerringly perceive a strange sense of contemplation from the living cube.

"This means," speaks the modron, in its perfectly disaffected monotone, "that after the time listed comes to pass, the One and the Prime will open the gates of Mechanus to the multiverse, ushering in all of my kind on a pan-dimensional march sweeping through all possible lands, culminating and concluding only when the will of the One and the Prime has reached its fruition."

Silence uncomprehending blankets the crowd. Shop-owners exchange glances with paupers. There is a sense among them that something of great importance has been said, but all are at a loss as to what, exactly.

The modron's human companion emits the smallest of sighs, and intones: "Well, yes, but what does it mean for these fine people?"

"The march of modron armies and workers will pass through these lands, and through this city," replies the modron, "Buildings and infrastructure may be levelled to allow the march to proceed. Those resisting the march's progress will be dispatched."

Silence of a different kind engulfs the crowd. Now, their attention is rapt, nervous, and earnest. What they saw as a mere curiosity before had become a threat to their very ways of life.

"Of course," the modron continues, "you have my assurance that the elimination of elements resistant to the march will be conducted in as orderly a fashion as possible."

The quiet continues for but a moment before, all at once, the crowd explodes into a frenzy. Merchants cry out for lost wares, mothers for lost homes, beggars for lost meals, in a torrent of sound that spills around street-corners, attracting yet further onlookers.

With the smallest of smiles, the modron's human companion raises his hand and waits, patiently. Given their moment of ire and anger, the crowd settles. Clearly, there is more to hear.

"Insurance," speaks the man.

"Insurance?" a small voice, somewhere deep in the crowd, cries.

"Yes, insurance. Modron insurance!" says the man jauntily, his showmanship in full swing, "For just two gold pieces a head, you don't have to lose a single one of your valuables. When the inevitable march comes to town in just a month..."

"...Twenty days, five hours, thirty-three minutes..." corrects the modron.

"...When the inevitable march arrives in just under a month," the man continues, "Simply tally up whatever it is the modrons destroy in their assuredly orderly fashion. If you have paid for insurance, simply present the list to me and you will be compensated in full!"

A murmur among the crowd. While many of the beggars grumble and dismiss a simple charlatan, still others with more to lose reach for their pouches and pocketbooks, and gold pieces find their way to waiting fingers.

The modron watches the business transactions with a placid perplexion. It wonders to itself why its human companion would ask it specifically to omit the amount of years until the grand march, but then considers that perhaps one-hundred and thirty-three years is an insignificant amount of time to humans. Regardless, thinks the modron, Mechanus and the grand march are no longer a home for it, and if the human is to be believed, security, safety, and success on the Prime Material all start with currency.

Still, in the back of its mind, it just can't help but feel that there must be a more orderly way to go about this business.

Beyond the knowing of all but the most adventurous or scholarly mortals lie the mechanical workings of reality, condensed into a magical plane of churning gears and machinery known as Mechanus. This realm is a place of pure, lawful order, and is populated and maintained by a hivemind of mechanical-biological creatures to whom law is truth, and dissent is unthinkable. These are modrons, creatures of unquestioning loyalty to the god-being Primus.

Or, such is typically the case. Sometimes, an unknowable something happens in the mind of a modron to separate it from the hivemind. Some modrons go missing, wander across the planes, and find great adventures of their own.

Metal and Flesh

Modrons come in a variety of geometrical shapes, from the spheroid monodrones to the segmented duodrones to cuboid quadrones, but all modrons of a given type are almost entirely identical to outsiders. For their part, modrons can easily tell one another apart, and inherently know the rank, station, and identity of other modrons from sight alone. Regardless of type or designation, all monodrones, duodrones, and quadrones are exactly six feet tall with their reverse-jointed legs extended fully upright, and each of these modrons weighs exactly 200 pounds.

Constructed by the will of (and as, some scholars argue, a living part of) the god-entity Primus, modrons are nevertheless not truly mechanical, nor are they entirely of flesh and bone. A modron's physiology consists of biological and mechanical components working in consort, and while the faces, eyes, and various internal organs of a modron may be similar to those of other living creatures, their armored exoskeleton and machine components often draw a closer comparison to sentient mechanical constructs, such as warforged.

Obedience and Deviance

Modrons are, by design, perfect avatars of order and law. It is not within their nature to disobey the will of Primus or to shirk their duties maintaining the delicate hidden machinery of the cosmos, but, somehow, deviance does occur. Indeed, any modron that would find itself adventuring or wandering away from other modrons is overwhelmingly likely to be deviant, and these rogue modrons are often the only modrons any being on the Prime Material is likely to encounter, outside of a march.

It is unknown precisely what initially causes this disobedience, though there are many theories. Rogue modrons themselves often trace their deviance back to being given an impossible order, or to witnessing a moment of incontrovertible proof of the universe's chaotic nature, or to simply having something within them snap. But these things should be impossible for modrons, designed to avoid, ignore, or disassemble anything that would cause them to question the absolute rule of law. Modrons loyal to Primus whisper of this deviance as a cancer on Mechanus, and treat any of their rogue brethren as dangerous, diseased radicals deserving of quarantine, healing, or extermination. A strange theory also

exists, on the edges of credibility, that this deviance is a part of the inscrutable design of Primus, to work the justice of order and the law with independent minions not entirely beholden to Primus' own will.

In any case, rogue modrons usually see their independence as a mixed blessing. They are capable of independent thought and free will, but are all but cast out of Mechanus, doomed to be perpetual foreigners in strange lands, removed from the logic and simplicity of the world they once knew. Rogue modrons do not mourn their fate, however, and seek only to either find a new purpose in life, or to fulfill a given purpose that they have found.

Logical and Literal

Even after going rogue, modrons often maintain their devotion to lawful order, as bringing law and order are typically seen to still be logical, rational choices to them. Rare even amongst outcasts is the modron who views their departure from the will of Primus as an excuse to become fully chaotic, though some such modrons assuredly exist. Modrons can trend good just as easily as evil, as without the guiding hand of Primus most modrons are left without a moral compass.

It is hard for a modron to think metaphorically, and such things as simile, poetic license, and even basic emotion fly right over their heads. Most modrons are intensely curious, though, and often search out new ideas or insights in an attempt to further order, classify, or control them. This fact, and a need for companionship and structure when left without the modron hierarchy, is what motivates many rogue modrons to seek out a life of adventure.

Modron Names

The culture of Mechanus has little use for names, typically utilizing the order in which a modron was created as a numerical designation. Modrons refer to each other either by this number (for example: "Unit 348"), or simply just address one another as "modron." The only exceptions seem to be modrons designated for interaction with foreign, travelling mortals, as a name allows for more efficient information exchange with such creatures. These named modrons are among the most likely to go rogue, though whether it is the fault of being named or of the mortals these modrons interact with is anyone's guess.

Modron names are not aligned to gender, as modrons have none. Unnamed rogue modrons typically go by a nickname, usually one given to them by their companions, as modrons often lack the imagination necessary to name themselves.

Modron Names: Cubix, Deesix, Dipart, Duo, Gon, Orbit, Quadrite, Semetrate, Simulacron, Spheron

Modron Nicknames: Boxbot, Corner, Duckbill, Edgewise, Eyeball, Nordom, Wingcube

Modron Traits

Your modron character has certain characteristics in common with all other modrons.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age. Modrons do not age, and are just as functional on the day of their creation as they are after a thousand years of living.

Alignment. All modrons begin their lives as lawful creatures, but after going rogue they may find themselves anywhere on the alignment spectrum. Many rogue modrons still remain strictly lawful, though this does not make their loyal peers see them as any less deviant.

Size. Approximately the same size as a human, modrons have a substantial mass and weight. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Living Construct. Forged from inanimate and living materials by the will of Primus, you are a construct, while at the same time you are a living creature. You are immune to disease. You do not need

to eat or breathe, but you can ingest food and drink if you wish. Additionally, you have two creature types: humanoid and construct. You can be affected by a spell or ability if it works on either of your creature types.

Darkvision. When you were in perfect accordance with the will of Primus, you were able to see all things as they truly are. Even now, you retain some vestiges of that true seeing. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Natural Armor. The designs of Primus cover your biological weak points with mechanical components. You have a base AC of 15 (your Dexterity modifier doesn't affect this number). If you are using a shield, you can apply the shield's bonus as normal.

Disintegration. When life leaves your form, its constituent parts disassemble and return to Mechanus, ensuring that no resources are wasted. When you fail three death saving throws or otherwise die, you disintegrate as if affected by the *disintegrate* spell.

Tireless. Your mental processes are streamlined enough that you do not require sleep. Magic can not put you to sleep, and instead of sleeping, you enter an inactive state for 4 hours each day. You do not dream in this state; you are fully aware of your surroundings and notice approaching enemies and other events as normal.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Modron, a logical, unembellished language known to all creatures native to Mechanus.

Subrace. Five castes of base modrons exist in Mechanus, and three of these are available as playable characters: monodrones, duodrones, and quadrones. Choose one of these subraces.

Monodrone

The lowest caste of modron society, monodrones are spherical with one central eye, and are utterly devoted to whichever task they are directed to accomplish. Monodrones are typically dispatched en masse to as unskilled laborers to accomplish massive construction projects, or as frontline soldiers against the enemies of Primus.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Myopic Focus. When dedicated to a task, you have an ingrained ability to tune out or ignore distraction. You have advantage on saving throws and checks made against illusions and the charmed condition.

Wings. When falling, you gently descend at a speed of 60 feet per round, and take no damage from falling. At 5th level, you gain a flying speed of 30 feet, but must land at the end of each of your turns when using this speed, or you begin falling. At 11th level, you no longer need to land at the end of each of your turns, and can stay aloft indefinitely.

Duodrone

The skilled laborers of Mechanus and the corporals of its armies, duodrones have a slightly more advanced mind than their monodrone counterparts, as well as two eyes and a segmented body in two parts. Duodrones often direct small cadres of monodrones, or put their superior intelligence to work accomplishing feats of artisanry that their lessers could not.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Artisan of Mechanus. You gain proficiency with two types of artisan's tools, and add twice your proficiency bonus in place of the normal bonus to checks with these tools.

Doubletask. You can take the Use an Object action or Dash action as a bonus action. You are able to do so twice. When you finish a short or long rest, you regain all expended uses of this trait.

Quadrone

Cuboid, winged taskmasters, the quadrones are the highest caste of base modrons not fully involved in enforcing the laws of Mechanus. As such, they are typically found flying over projects or battlefields, directing other modrons for maximum efficiency.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom or Charisma score increases by 1.

Taskmaster. You can use the Help action as a bonus action. Additionally, when you use the Help action with this trait to aid an ally in attacking a creature, the target of that attack can be within 15 feet of you, rather than within 5 feet of you, if the target can see or hear you. You can use this trait four times, and regain any expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Wings. When falling, you gently descend at a speed of 60 feet per round, and take no damage from falling. At 5th level, you gain a flying speed of 30 feet, but must land at the end of each of your turns when using this speed, or you begin falling. At 11th level, you no longer need to land at the end of each of your turns, and can stay aloft indefinitely.

Additional Background

The following background is offered as an option for modron characters, in addition to those provided by the *Player's Handbook*.

Rogue Modron

Exiles from an alternate plane of reality and a hivemind upbringing, rogue modrons occupy a unique place within the cosmos and are perpetual strangers wherever they travel. They are always inquisitive and willing to try new things, perhaps in an effort to fill the void caused by their exile.

Requirements: Must be a modron

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Travelling pack, a handful of cogs, a simple dagger, a set of artisan's tools, and a small coin purse containing 5 gp.

Moment of Discord

Every rogue modron can trace their independence to a single moment, a causal factor that broke their mind and their connection to the modron collective. Some rogue modrons look upon this moment with apathy, but many more look at the instant of their divergence with either gratitude or loathing. This moment of discord is what makes a rogue modron who they are, and in many ways can color the content of a modron's emerging personality just as much as their adventures to come.

d8 **Moment of Discord**

- 1 A mortal presented me with a particularly devious logical paradox.
- 2 I stared into the Abyss. The Abyss stared back.
- 3 Two superior modrons presented me with directly conflicting orders.
- 4 During a moment of inactivity, a portentous vision appeared in my mind.
- 5 I became attached to a mortal, and began feeling strong feelings of friendship when my mind snapped.
- 6 I was assigned a task with far more complexity than I could possibly achieve.
- 7 I came into contact with a powerful artifact not meant for modron hands.
- 8 I lost my way during a march, and my fellow modrons left without me.

Feature: Underlying Order

You are intimately familiar with the hidden mechanisms that run the order of the cosmos, and you know which small things can be done to lead to much larger, more beneficial ends. A handful of small coinage left on a street corner, a door opened or closed, or a brick removed from a wall can all in their tiny way shift the direction of the universe, providing dividends to you and your friends.

Once each day, an opportunity presents itself for you to undertake a small, non-harmful, and often-nonsensical action determined by the DM. You inherently know what this potential action is at the moment it can occur.

If you perform this action, it will trigger a series of usually observable events that will provide you with either food and lodging for you and your companions for the day, or with services or items (the cost of which cannot exceed 5 gp). These events will transpire before the end of the day, and you never know the exact nature of what this ability will provide beforehand, as the result of this ability is chosen by the DM.

Lodging and food provided by this ability is always relatively safe of any harmful elements, and the items or services you accrue do not come with drawbacks of any kind.

Suggested Characteristics

Rogue modrons are often inquisitive and profoundly confused about the disorder that awaits them outside Mechanus. Some endeavor to fix things and make them right, while others slowly allow the chaos to color their perceptions, becoming less and less modron-like as time goes on.

In this vein, rogue modrons will often adopt the odd quirks present in their companions as a way of adapting and surviving, driven towards conformity as they are. Changes in oneself such as this can alarm a rogue modron, but most gradually become used to the idea.

d8 **Personality Trait**

- 1 Everything has a time and a place. I often find it best just to let things be.
- 2 I often directly ask others what emotional response my actions elicit.
- 3 I have an incredibly hard time assigning monetary worth to anything.
- 4 I categorize the social positions of others, and assign them a modron caste even if they are not modrons.
- 5 Biological creatures fascinate me, and I ask them many (sometimes incredibly personal) questions.
- 6 I often ask about the purpose of common implements, and sometimes attempt to combine them into improved forms.
- 7 I observe the pieces, so that I may figure out the whole.
- 8 I document all the important things that others I observe do, but I have a loose definition of "importance."

d6 **Ideal**

- 1 **Independence.** I must find my own identity in this new world! (Chaotic)
- 2 **Maintenance.** As I tended Mechanus, so too must I tend the land I find myself in. (Good)
- 3 **Information.** One can never have enough knowledge. (Neutral)
- 4 **Improvement.** I must better myself if I am to survive. (Neutral)
- 5 **Order.** I must always maintain order, whatever the cost. (Lawful)
- 6 **Repatriation.** I must find a way to rejoin the other modrons, however I can. (Lawful)

d6 **Bond**

- 1 I owe a life-debt to the being that gave me my name.
- 2 I have taken on a particular culture or way of life as my own, and will go to great lengths for its ideals.
- 3 Other modrons must be shown the enlightenment of independent thought.
- 4 A cadre of modrons are hunting me to remove my individuality, and I'm opposed to the idea of losing myself.
- 5 Other beings are said to have souls. Do I? I must find out.
- 6 The march comes, and only I can save those in its path.

d6 **Flaw**

- 1 If a modron's mind can break, can the minds of other beings? I must experiment and find out.
- 2 Sometimes, I just have to count every one of a particular item in a room.
- 3 I often have a very hard time telling apart biological entities that are not my companions.
- 4 I have an incredibly hard time coping with surprises.
- 5 I find my companions impossibly fascinating, and regularly watch them sleep, unblinking.
- 6 I collect pieces of biological beings, a practice that they occasionally find objectionable.